

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00 A-01

OPR-02 SY-05 ACDA-05 SCCT-01 IO-11 SIL-01 LAB-04 OC-05

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O 241445Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE NIACT 6067

INFO COMICEDEFOR

CINCLANT

C O N F I D E N T I A L REYKJAVIK 0260

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, PFOR, ELAB, IC

SUBJECT: UNION BLOCKAGE OF GAS SALES ON BASE

REF: COMICEDEFOR 232245Z FEB 76 (RPTD AS REYKJAVIK 0259)

1. AS REPORTED BY REFTTEL, ICELANDIC UNION PICKETS HAVE BLOCKED SALE OF GASOLINE BY STATION ON AGREED AREA OF BASE AS PART OF OVERALL GENERAL STRIKE ACTION. IN ANTICIPATION OF THIS MOVE, BASE HAD TAKEN STRICK MEASURES TO ASSURE THAT THERE COULD BE NO CHARGES THAT GASOLINE WAS LEAKING TO ICELANDERS. SINCE STATION IS IN NO WAY INVOLVED IN DISPUTE, MOVE MUST BE INTERPRETED AS PUBLICITY-SEEKING ONE AIMED AT BRINGING BASE INTO ICELANDIC DOMESTIC PROBLEM.

2. ROLE OF ICELANDIC GATE POLICE IN MATTER IS HIGHLY QUESTIONABLE SINCE THEY NOT ONLY ALLOWED PICKETS ON BASE BUT ESCORTED THEM TO STATION AND STOOD BY TO PREVENT INCIDENTS BETWEEN THEM AND IDF PERSONNEL. AS NOTED IN REFTTEL, POLICE CHIEF (ACTING UNDER INSTRUCTIONS FROM MFA) REFUSED TO RE-
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MOVE PICKETS AND DEFENSE COUNCIL CHAIRMEN (WHEN APPROACHED

INFORMALLY) REFUSED TO TAKE ACTION. CHARGE DISCUSSED PROBLEM WITH FOREIGN AFFAIRS ADVISOR TO PRIMEMIN MORNING OF FEB 23 TO ALERT HIM THAT IT HAD ARISEN AND WE MIGHT HAVE TO REQUEST FORCEFUL ACTION. BASE APPROACHED POLICE CHIEF AGAIN TODAY WHEN STATION WAS AGAIN BLOCKED WITH NO RESULTS AND EMERGENCY MEETING OF DEFENSE COUNCIL WAS REQUESTED AT WHICH FORMAL REQUEST WAS MADE THAT GOI REMOVE PICKETS.

3. ALTHOUGH ISSUE MAY APPEAR RELATIVELY MINOR ONE, POINT HAS NOT BEEN LOST ON LEFTIST AGITATORS THAT PICKETS WERE ALLOWED THROUGH GATES BY ICELANDIC POLICE. THERE IS NO PREVIOUS RECORD OF SUCH ACTION. RUMORS ARE CIRCULATING THAT LOCAL MERCHANTS IN BASE AREA OR STORE CLERK'S UNION MAY TRY SIMILAR ACTION AGAINST COMMISSARY AND BASE EXCHANGE. IF SUCH STEPS ARE ALLOWED, THEN WAY IS OBVIOUSLY OPEN FOR AGITATORS IN POLITICAL CAUSE TO HAVE THEIR FLING AND BLOCAD E ANY PORTION OF BASE OPERATIONS THEY MIGHT CHOOSE.

4. STEPS OUTLINED ABOVE WERE TAKEN BY BASE AND EMBASSY BECAUSE WE WISHED TO GO THROUGH ESTABLISHED CHANNELS AND BE REFUSED BEFORE ESCALATING TO HIGHEST LEVEL. WITH POLICE AND DEFENSE COUNCIL REFUSING TO ACT, IT IS CLEAR THAT MINISTRIES OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND JUSTICE HAVE BEEN UNWILLING TO ISSUE ORDERS. THEREFORE, UNLESS INSTRUCTED TO CONTRARY, CHARGE WILL CALL ON PRIMEMIN FEB 25 TO MAKE FOLLOWING POINTS:

(A) BASE TOOK ALL POSSIBLE PRECAUTIONS TO LIMIT GASOLINE TO THOSE ENTITLED TO IT.

(B) DISPUTE IS ONE IN WHICH NEITHER BASE NOR USG CAN OR SHOULD PLAY ANY ROLE.

(C) ACTION BY PICKETS IS ATTEMPT TO INVOLVE BASE IN INTERNAL ICELANDIC MATTER.

(D) WE DO NOT UNDERSTAND POLICE ALLOWING PICKETS OR DEMONSTRATORS THROUGH GATES IN CLEAR VIOLATION OF STANDING AGREEMENTS AND ESTABLISHED PRACTICE.
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(E) PRECEDENT FOR PICKETING AND DEMONSTRATIONS ON BASE IS ONE WHICH BOTH WE AND GOI WOULD FIND MOST DIFFICULT TO LIVE WITH.

(F) WHILE UNDER BASE AGREEMENT, IDF HAS FULL RIGHT TO REMOVE PICKETS FROM AGREED AREA, WE DO NOT SEEK CONFRONTATION OR TO ADD TO PRIMEMIN'S OTHER PROBLEMS AND,

THEREFORE, HAVE NO PRESENT INTENTION TO ACT ON THAT RIGHT.

(G) WHILE BLOCKING SALE OF GASOLINE FOR TWO DAYS HAD NO SERIOUS EFFECT ON BASE OPERATIONS, TIME HAS NOW BEEN REACHED WHERE ABILITY OF BASE PERSONNEL TO GET TO JOBS ON BASE OR REMOTE AREAS IS IN QUESTION. THEREFORE, QUESTION OF DEROGATION OF DEFENSE CAPABILITY IS BEING RAISED.

(H) IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, WE MUST STRONGLY PRESS GOI TO ACT ON ITS AGREED RESPONSIBILITIES AND ISSUE ORDERS IMMEDIATELY FOR REMOVAL OF PICKETS AND TO GIVE ASSURANCES THAT DEMONSTRATORS AND PICKETS WILL NOT AGAIN BE ALLOWED ON AGREED AREAS.
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